

IAE Rapid Experimentation Lab Ribbon Cutting

Remarks Delivered by USF President Rhea Law

March 22, 2024

Good afternoon! I am delighted to be here to congratulate you and the Institute of Applied Engineering team on reaching the finish line for this project. I know it has been challenging – especially with a global pandemic and supply chain issues – so after four years of hard work, this is an occasion worth celebrating.

I want to acknowledge the Hillsborough County Commission, which provided the grant funding to turn this dream into a reality. The support from the community has been incredible and we are excited to enhance and expand our partnerships.

The Institute of Applied Engineering is a critical element in USF's global and national security initiative, which is a key area of focus in our strategic plan. Through our partnerships with the U.S. Department of Defense, including MacDill Air Force Base, and other stakeholders, we are providing solutions to pressing challenges faced by our nation.

Solving global problems is at the heart of what we do at USF, and the research activities of our faculty and staff drive so much of the work that distinguishes our institution.

Just a few days ago, we announced that research funding awarded to USF reached an all-time high of \$692 million in fiscal year 2023 – an increase of nearly 27% from the previous year.

That total represents USF's entire research enterprise, including our affiliates and direct support organizations, such as the Institute of Applied Engineering.

Conducting high-impact research is a big reason why we were invited last year to join the Association of American Universities. The dedicated work of our innovative faculty, talented research staff, and collaborative partners continues to help lift USF's research enterprise to new heights.

And as we address today's challenges, we are preparing our students to take on tomorrow's. We provide our students with the skills they need to think critically, conduct sound research, and adapt to rapidly evolving industries. We help them become agile and respond to emerging challenges.

One of the ways we do that is through experiential learning. Through its internship program that has benefited over 800 students, the IAE is helping our partners meet their workforce needs while also filling the talent pipeline in high-demand fields, both here in the Tampa Bay region and beyond.

The Rapid Experimentation Lab will enhance the Institute's ongoing efforts to advance knowledge and find solutions, and your contributions will continue to have a significant impact on USF's remarkable trajectory and our nation's security.

Thank you for joining us today for this momentous occasion, and as always, Go Bulls!